



A PLAN
FOR
PRODUCING AN UNIFORMITY
IN THE
ORNAMENTAL PART
OF
Bank or other Bills
WHERE THERE IS DANGER OF FORGERY,
AND
FOR FURNISHING THE PUBLIC
WITH A CONVENIENT AND INFALLIBLE
TEST
FOR THE SAME.
With a brief explanation of its Importance,
TOGETHER WITH
A NEW SET OF FIGURES DESIGNED PARTICULARLY FOR
BANK BILLS.

RECOMMENDED TO THE CAREFUL ATTENTION OF ALL WHO
WOULD WISH TO PROMOTE THE MOST EFFECTUAL
MEANS FOR EXTINGUISHING THE ENORMOUS
EVIL OF COUNTERFEITING.

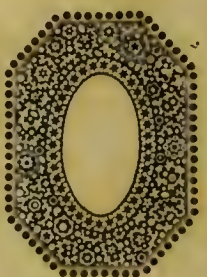
By
Chas. B. Smith

PHILADELPHIA:

PRINTED BY THOMAS TOWN, NO. 3, NORRIS'S ALLEY.

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1810.





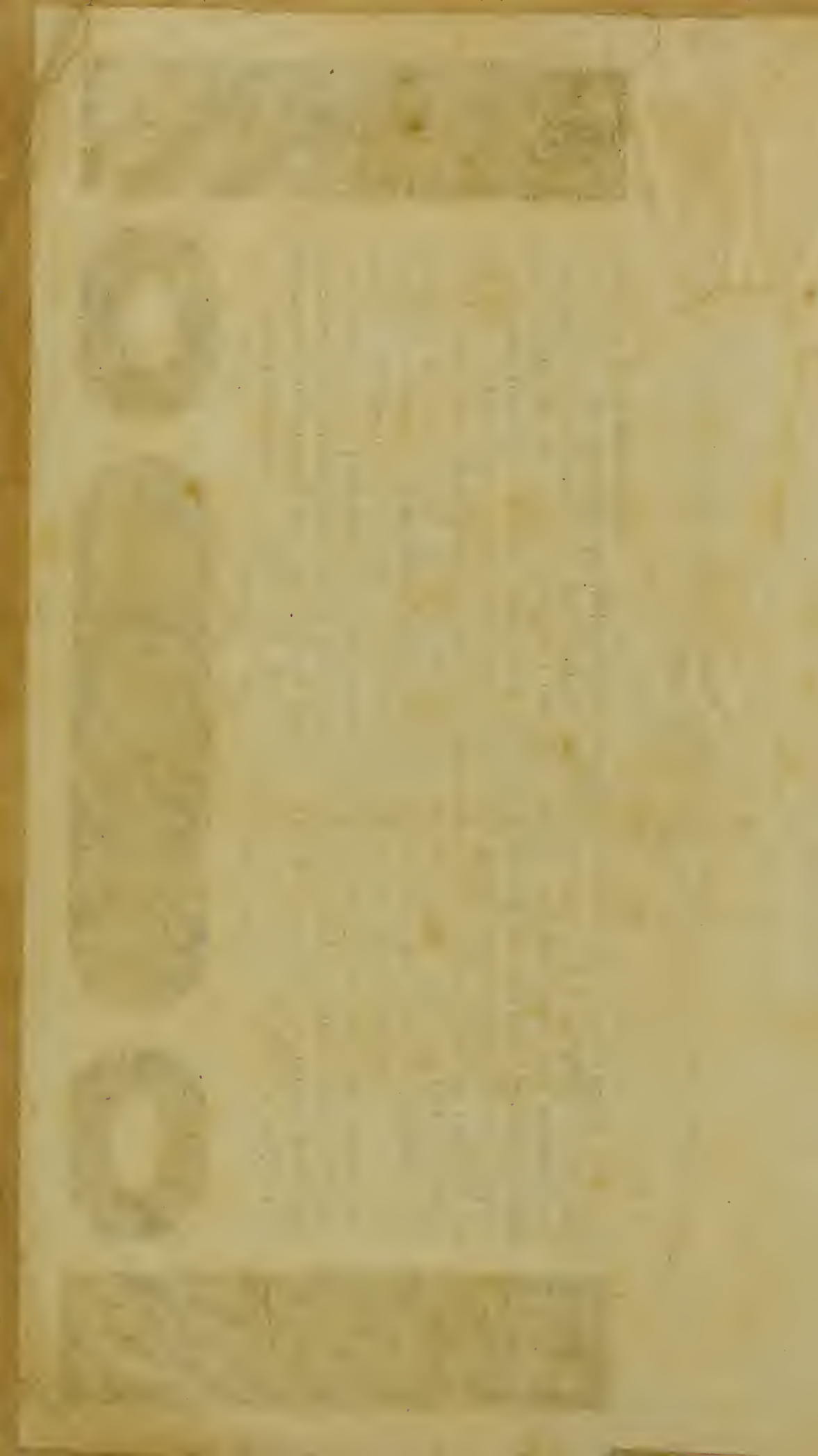
EXPLANATION OF THIS STANDARD.

This impression is subject to many imperfections, from want of the Press and apparatus for sinking the Dies in the plates. The letters within the circles intended to contain the denomination of the Bills, were stamped in promiscuously, and done with such punches as I happened to have—they serve to shew how distinct the denomination will appear in such work, and to prevent an abuse of this impression.

To gain a correct knowledge of the Standard, select one or more object, or part, and examine the same *critically*, and after taking a general view of the Bill as it comes to hand, direct the eye right to *that* part or object—there can be no essential variation in the size, shape, or place of this immense variety of objects, if the impression is genuine.

Besides, there is a *distinct boldness* in the appearance of these figures, peculiar to the manner they were made in the Dies; and when on Bank-paper, and held up so as the light may appear *through* it, they may be distinguished instantly from figures made *any other way*: and although the impression should be uncommonly dark or dirty, the distinction will be perceptible.





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THE time and experience, which is often requisite to bring New Discoveries to perfection and demonstrate their worth, and the opposition which they naturally excite from interested and other motives, generally conducted more or less unfairly, has frequently baffled the most judicious efforts, and sometimes defeated or delayed the use of important inventions. It is therefore not extraordinary, that this undertaking should have labored under the usual misrepresentations and embarrassments, from the novelty and extreme difficulty of making and *perpetuating* ornamental figures of the kind, and from the consequences which it naturally aspires to.

It would be unwise to hastily adopt every *new thing* that might be plausibly or pleasingly represented, or introduced. But it would become gentlemen of discernment and respectability, to attend candidly to such things as might be worthy of encouragement.

I am aware of the prejudices that time and ingenuity are forming against me, often constituting more formidable obstacles to the progress of useful inventions, than the mysteries which conceal them in nature.

It is not my object to render the Bills more *beautiful* than usual, although they might be considered handsome. It is impossible to make and

perpetuate delicate shades, and even if it were, such work is for ever doubtful and not to be depended upon as a *criterion*, and the public have been deceived often enough to know, that *beauty* is not an infallible criterion of worth—even in a *Bank Bill*.

The principle object of this undertaking is, *to produce a BOLD, DISTINCT, and INFALLIBLE CRITERION, on all the Bank Bills in the United States, in ADDITION to the usual security and variety of the Bills, and to furnish the Public with a TEST for the same.*

I am far from believing that any thing can be made that cannot be imitated in a greater or less degree. But I am firmly persuaded that the principle work of the annexed STANDARD, *cannot* be imitated by any means, with equal facility and accuracy as any other kind of work, and although I have witnessed repeated attempts to imitate such work, by some of the first masters of the Graphic art, yet their never has been a shadow of evidence produced to the contrary.

It is not merely one solitary point, for which I claim excellence, but a PLAN combining *many*, and the following advantages over every other plan or method of making Bills.—

1st, The principle work of the annexed standard, is MORE DIFFICULT TO IMITATE than any other kind, and is made in the original *Dies* or *Punches* in such a manner, as to be LESS LIABLE TO VARY, printed either from plates or types, than figures made in the usual manner.

2dly, The standard figures may be made on the Bills of EVERY BANK AND DENOMINATION ALIKE, and the Bills effectually guarded against *alteration*, without any unusual incumbrance or confusion,—constituting an entire ADDITION to the usual security of the Bills, and without any

considerable additional expense,*—leaving it with every Bank to have their own particular Arms or Devices on their Bills, witness the finishing, and have the keeping of their own plates, have their particular paper, and preserve generally the same stile of engraving that they now do, and which is familiar to the public.

3dly, The plan provides a GENERAL and infallible TEST, by which the public may *prove* a true Bill, whenever occasion requires.

In short, this plan makes the Bills *Uniform* to all intents and purposes desired,—rendering them *greatly* more difficult than usual to counterfeit, and furnishing the public with perhaps an *hundred* times more general and effectual means for distinguishing the same, *without depriving the Bills of their usual security or distinction.*

The following observations further explain the importance of this plan.

To *make*, and to *imitate*, are two very different things; figures may be very readily made, that would not be in the power of art to immitate with *common* accuracy†.

Regular work, consisting of direct lines, true turns, exact shapes and distances, when not incorporated with irregular figures, may be made or copied by RULE, and done with great ease and accuracy. But Chance or Vitriolic‡ work, obviously is more difficult to imitate; and when

* Even at much *less* expense than many Bills are made at, particularly those that are printed from a plate *and* type, and those that are printed on *both sides*.

† By common accuracy, I mean that accuracy with which different plates are engraved alike.

‡ This work is *like* that which is produced by vitriolic acid, but not done *with it*; the work is effected by quite a different method, and with great pains and expense. It is impossible to make figures accurately in steel for this use, with *acid*,—it injures the nature of the steel, and makes a rough and bungling impression.

interspersed or incorporated with regular figures, and made in that correct manner which the standard is, they are out of the power of art to imitate with *common accuracy**; and yet the *same-ness* of such work, may be as readily distinguished by the eye, as that of any other.

Figures made sloping on their sides, or extremely shallow in the plate, are subject to perpetual variations, from the filling and wearing of the plate; but when made perpendicular on their sides, and of an equal and proper depth in the plate, as the standard figures are, the impressions will not essentially vary during the ordinary use of the plates.

It is impossible to distinguish a genuine Bill, without some *particular* knowledge of it; and to judge a Bill from recollection, is hazardous, particularly for COUNTRY people, who generally are the most deficient in means and qualifications to judge of such things. And even to compare Bill by Bill, were they all made Uniform, would not be infallible, as a counterfeit might be compared by a counterfeit. But a blank copy or standard, *once* known to be genuine, could never deceive, and every person might be in possession of a Standard, although they might not always have a Bill.

Besides, a very simple capacity can judge of a *fac simile*, or *compare* two things and see when they are *alike*; while not one in five hundred, are competent judges of the materials and workmanship, that generally distinguish genuine Bills.

In fact, it would be about as impossible and useless to learn the variety of Bills in circulation,

* Men often conceit they can do things that are not so easily accomplished as they may imagine; one thing is to *conceit* and another is to *do*,—if any one has a mind to try the strength of this fact, let him offer,—I am ready to pledge a reasonable sum, and give an extraordinary term of time for accomplishing the work.

as it would be to gain a correct knowledge of every stranger that passes along. But in case of a General Standard like the present, every one would see an advantage in gaining a *particular* knowledge of it, and *one* lesson would be much easier and better learned, than many.

It is believed that nine tenths of the counterfeit Bills that circulate, pass for want of a correct knowledge of the original.

It is said, the public would not attend to the means for distinguishing true Bills, if they were furnished. Possibly many would not, but this is no reason why others should not be furnished with the means, and particularly when it costs the proprietor's of Banks nothing.

Although this Plan provides generally against counterfeiting, as well perhaps as is possible, still it never was my expectation to furnish means for the *blind*, or *hasty*—such people must always be subject to imposition.

Much time is frequently spent to determine the truth of a spurious Bill, and often to little or no purpose. But according to the provision of this Plan, the truth of a Bill may be determined with infallible certainty, and almost instantly, particularly after a little experience; thereby enabling the Public not only to distinguish good money, but to save time.

Doubtless the *quantity* of work contained in the annexed Standard, is sufficient; for if it were possible to produce a good imitation of the present, it would also be possible to imitate it if the quantity was much greater, and the person who could not readily distinguish a difference in this quantity, would not if it were ten times as great. And yet, if the quantity should be considerably reduced, it might induce an attempt to counterfeit that would not be made with the pre-

sent quantity : and as it does not materially discommode the Bill, I think it had better be indulged.

Although it is impossible to make delicate shades and represent Animals so beautifully in plates with punches, as with the graver, or by etching, still they may be continued, and answer an important purpose on this Standard ; for they not only form large and interesting objects, that may be distinguished at considerable distance, but there is an expression peculiar to Animals, which renders them extremely difficult to imitate, while it enables the eye more readily to perceive, and the memory more easily to retain their *sameness* of expression, than that of any other figure.

Any thing, the making or immitating of which depends principally on a secret, that when known might be readily accomplished, could not be expected to serve a lasting and valuable purpose, as a general criterion for distinguishing between genuine and spurious Bills.

Increasing the the variety of figures on a Die, multiplies the obsticles to making it, and increases the number of objects produced by it for inspection.

Large Dies are much more difficult to make, and use, than small ones.

By impressing a Die a number of times in the same plate, increases the temptation to counterfeit the Die.

Perhaps it may be asked, whether there is not sufficient temptation to induce an undertaking to counterfeit the Dies that impress the standard figures in the plates, and argued, that although it would be attended with vast pains and expense, yet when done, they would serve to impress a great number of plates.

Should an attempt ever be made to counterfeit the Dies, by never so masterly a hand, a number

of conspicuous and *irreparable* errors must unavoidably exist, which when once detected and made public, would ever afterwards be *marked*, and render the deception harmless. These considerations limiting the prospect of success, in addition to the obstacles of an engraved bill, which must be incountered with every different plate, together with the correct means the public would have for distinguishing the true figures, would, in addition to the magnitude of the undertaking, completely destroy every temptation to counterfeit the Dies.

Plates made up of various *pieces*; as the steel plates generally are, afford many and obvious facilities to counterfeiting: the *pieces* may be made of various kinds of metal, to accommodate different methods of imitating the various kinds of work or parts of the Bill; when an error happens in the course of executing, it simply subjects the *piece* containing of it, to be altered or made over, and not the whole plate: and even after the Bills are put in circulation and any conspicuous error detected, by altering or making over the *piece* containing of it, the public might be deceived again, and again.

Besides, if it should be an object, *one* such plate would counterfeit Bills of all the different Banks in a State, by just adding their several names and places, which are contained on *pieces*. Steel plates tend greatly to increase the temptation to counterfeit. As there is very little difference betwixt making or imitating a Bill on steel, than on copper, and when done, *one* steel plate would produce Bills enough, of the common size, to make the fortunes for a great number of undertakers, and in case Bills from steel plates were in general use, they would not attract singular attention if they were scattered out for ten, fifteen, or *twenty years*.

Where the Bills have the same general appearance throughout, to an extensive degree, as from steel plates, after being seen a few times, they cease to attract particular attention, and counterfeits, by having the same general appearance, gain currency thereby.

This is peculiarly guarded against in this Plan, by using copper plates, and never having the *engraved* parts of two Bills alike—that is, the standard figures always the same, and the engraved parts continually changing in a considerable and conspicuous degree: the former to serve as a *standing* criterion, and the latter as an *active* check. In this way the engraved parts of the Bills would assume an intire *new* appearance every few years, causing a frequent attention to the Standard, interrupting the designs of counterfeiters, and even making an *old* Bill attract singular attention—by being circulated *out of season*.

Thick white paper, resembling that which is used by sundry Banks to the Eastward, is easily procured; but good and proper Bank-paper, is difficult for counterfeiters to procure, and has already been the principle cause of detecting numerous counterfeits.

To guard the Bills of a part of the Banks in the United States against counterfeiting, and leave the rest exposed as usual, would only have a tendency to change the *course* of counterfeiting: and the Bills that have hitherto been safe, may soon become the sport of those desperadoes, whose arts have hitherto been the means of robbing *millions* from the “mouth of labor,” and of plunging hundreds or thousands of fellow creatures into wretchedness and ruin.

As Mr. Perkins, the maker of certain Bills used to the Eastward, has scrupled my right to use *punches*, to produce the standard figures in plates as infringing his Patent, I therefore beg leave

to trouble the reader with a few particulars relative thereto, which was not in my power to state in former communications—that those who regard justice, may not scruple to patronize this Plan, and that they may not encourage the trespass or infringement, which Mr. Perkins is now practising on my right.

It is necessary to state, that before I solicited a Patent, I went to Washington City for the purpose of ascertaining the bounds of my right, and on application to Dr. Thornton, Secretary of the Patent Department, was informed, that my Plan did not interfere with any thing specified in his Office,—and that I had an undoubted right to use *punches*. And further, according to recollection, he informed me, that every thing previously Patented for the purpose of preventing counterfeiting, had proved worthless and been abandoned.

It now appears from information obtained from said Secretary, that *there never has been a PATENT granted from that Office, to any one, for “STEREOTYPE.”* And therefore it appears, as published by Mr. Perkins, A LIBEL.

It further appears, that about eleven years since, Mr. Perkins obtained a Patent for what he called a “*check die*,”—a punch, making the words “*public utility*,” in a circular form, with white lines across the letters. This was soon *counterfeited*, and *abandoned*, and a distinct line drawn by *Mr. Perkins*, between that and what he afterwards pursued.

This distinction was made in a pamphlet, which Mr. Perkins published about the year 1804, wherein he says, that “three years have elapsed since Bills from “*stereotype plates*” have been circulating, and no attempt has been known to have been made to counterfeit them.” But he knew that Bills bearing the impression of his “*check die*,” had been much longer in circula-

tion—had been *counterfeited*—and the use of the Die *abandoned*.

When a person solicits a Patent for a new discovered art or improvement, he is required to give it a *name*, and *form*, where form is essential to the principle—that the different rights recorded in the Patent Office may thereby be distinguished:—And also, to explain the process or manner of producing the same.

Mr. Perkins's "*check die*" is a simple, diffinite, and limited thing; and which required no great skill to produce; nor had any more to do with the *making* of Bills, than the Supervisor's Stamp, that has sometimes been put on. But his "*stereotype plates*," are complex and extensive, and his method of producing the same, is tedious and critical.

Long after I had devised this Plan, commenced the course to secure a Patent, and get the Plan into use, Mr. Perkins *modified* his make of Bills, from a *partial* and *doubtful* uniformity,* and took possession of the principle benefits of this plan,—as if there had been no laws or sense of justice in the country.†

* It was *partial*, because it generally distinguished only the *denominative* parts of the Bills, and, of course, changed accordingly; and it was *doubtful*, not only because it was liable to considerable variation, from the ordinary use of the plates, but because it consisted of such a simple kind of work, that a person possessed of a moderate share of skill or ingenuity, could produce a very accurate imitation of it, in the way the original was, or might have been made, and do it in less than a fiftieth part of the time, it would require one of the first artists in the country to *make* (*not imitate*) an equal surface of the annexed standard.

† I will here venture to express a wish, in unison with a number of fellow sufferers, that the Guardians of individual and public safety, may extend their fostering care more effectually to the protection of enterprizes of this kind, so useful to our country.

It is, indeed, said by some, that *no* Patent is worth *six cents*, and that they *will* do any thing they chuse.

This he did under the frivolous pretext, that he had *attempted* something of the kind, “as early as the year 1805.” But, it may be remarked, that however great Mr. Perkins’s necessity was for *using* such an improvement in the making of his Bills, *he had not—but actually continued to have the mere ornamental part etched directly into the plates as usual, until the latter part of the year 1806, if not longer, and which was long after I had devised this plan.*

This infringement on my right, has been peculiarly aggravated, by a course of *policy* which followed it up, on the part of Mr. Perkins, not more cunning than disingenious.

It is not for any particular *method* of perpetuating the ornaments and effecting the uniformity, that I claim an exclusive privilege—But for *making* the mere Ornamental part of different Bills UNIFORM, by plates, types or vehicles reserved exclusively for communicating the same on to the Bills, *and* a considerable part of Chance or Vitriolic work, (which will distinguish a great variety of objects in form, colour, or manner *as may please*;) with the particulars of every different Bill incorporated therewith, *and* furnishing the Public with a printed copy thereof, for the mere purpose of TESTING the Bills.

I have shewn it to be practicable to produce this uniformity by two different methods, and lodged specifications of the same in the Patent Office, possibly others might be devised.

Perhaps it would be impossible to please every one with the same ornaments. I am sensible the present might be greatly improved in beauty and excellence. I have labored under many disadvantages in doing what has already been done. However, if the Plan generally merits encouragement, the work may be carried to immense per-

fection, manifesting as much skill or ingenuity as any thing that was ever made on a Bill, and any alterations or regulations made that public good may require.

It is very desirable that all the Bank Bills in the United States should be made Uniform, in a considerable part. If some of the principle Banks will agree upon certain Ornaments, to use as a General Standard; and a deposit for the means of communicating the same, the work shall be immediately commenced. Mr. *Reick*, Deputy Engraver in the Mint, whose taste and abilities as a workman, need no recommendation, has engaged to assist in making Ornamental Dies, or Types, that may be necessary for the promotion of this Plan; and with his assistance, I have no doubt of answering every reasonable expectation.

The uniformity might be produced by plates, or types,—and if the whole Bill was printed off *typographically*, they might be made for about one fourth of their present expense; and perhaps answer every purpose. Immense pains might be taken in ornamenting the *original* types, and multiplying of them by casting, or milling, would reduce them to a very reasonable price. The particulars of every different Bill, and Bank, might be designated by letters and figures incorporated in the types, or plates, so as to guard against alteration *in every particular*.

Why would not the surface of an accurate type, used only while fair, with excellent materials, and by skilful artists, produce and perpetuate as accurate a *sameness*, and constitute as great obstacles to counterfeiting, as any thing else?

I had it in contemplation to print the ornaments in *colours*, by a *spring type*, and have no doubt I might have produced some *pretty pictures*. However, concluding that ornaments *might* be counterfeited even if they were printed in *colours*, and

possibly with greater success than usual, after the secret was found out, as colours dazzle the sight, and are subject to extreme variation from use, as a circulating medium; I therefore suspended my operations; and am fully persuaded, that there is nothing superior to GOOD BLACK INK, for printing Bank Bills.

Each Bank might have one or more ornamental Type or Die, made and reserved exclusively to themselves, and use them whether a General Standard was adopted or not. Surely it would be important, if only the smallest of the annexed figures were made on the Bills.

The Hartford Bank, (Con.) have had Bills in very extensive circulation since the year 1807, (the first made according to this Plan,) and I have never learned that any of them have been counterfeited, although the work was much inferior to the present, and numerous other Bills have been counterfeited during the same term of time. I do not mention this as affording conclusive evidence, but as an argument in favor of the Plan.

After making the plate from which the annexed impression was taken, the Dies and principle means used to ornament them, were sealed up by respectable gentlemen, and remain in my possession, to be put under any reasonable restrictions that the Bank first chusing to have plates impressed with them, may think proper.

The price of Plates impressed with these Dies, and finished ready for the Engraver, will be ten dollars for every intire impression, and proportionably for plates impressed with any one, or number of them:—And any thing for the promotion of this Plan, will be done reasonable.

By incorporating the denomination of the Bills with the standard figures in the plates, within the six circles at each end of the three large figures, in the two blank ovals, and in the ground work of

the engraved device, will effectually guard the Bills against *alteration*—so that any other precaution may be taken that the Banks may deem necessary.

The centre figure is left out to give more latitude and distinction to an engraved device.

Every different impression of the Dies, will be designated by letters or figures incorporated with them in the plates.

All applications for plates, must be attended with the most satisfactory evidences and references, and made free of expense, or no notice will be taken of them.

I have endeavored to answer every reasonable enquiry into the merits of this Plan; but shall make no calculation for the tricks and quibbles of those who study *only to find fault and oppose*.

Such I leave to the candor and good sense of the Public for detection; and recommend, when any arguments are brought against this Plan, that have not already been satisfactorily answered, that they may be applied to every other plan or method of making Bills; and then recollect, that the Bills will retain all their usual security or distinction *independent of the Standard*. Should it be pretended that some of the first engravers *could* produce a tolerable imitation of a Bill of this kind, ask, how much better imitation they could produce of a common Bill? how much quicker they could do it? and how much less liable to detection it would be, if offered to the Public, than Bills made according to this Plan?

I know not what plausible *methods* or *colourings* ingenuity may devise to evade the law, and get possession of the principle benefits of this Plan: I rely chiefly on the merits of the undertaking, and the honor of the Public for a reward.

ABEL BREWSTER.

Philadelphia, March 1810.

Since publishing the foregoing, I have been favoured with the opinions of the following Gentlemen,—all of whom are professional Engravers.

Philadelphia, March 23d, 1810.

I am of opinion that Mr. Brewster's Plan for Bank and other Bills, is more difficult to imitate than any thing I have seen, and intermixed with other engravings will be beneficial, as the notes will require more accomplices for counterfeiting, and of course add to the probability of detection.

JOHN DRAPER.

Philadelphia, March 23d, 1810.

We do hereby certify, that having examined Mr. Brewster's Plan for BANK or other BILLS, we are fully of opinion that it is intitled to the merit or advantages which he claims for it.

ROBERT SCOTT, Eng. Mint.
JOHN REICH,
ALEXANDER LAWSON,
D. EDWIN,
SAMUEL SEYMOUR,
CORNELIOUS TIEBOUT,
BENJAMIN TANNER,
H. S. TANNER,
JOSH. H. SEYMOUR,
ENOCH G. GRIDLEY,
WILLIAM KNEASS,
BENJAMIN JONES,
WM. R. JONES.

ABEL BREWSTER.

*For whom, at present enquire at
No. 10, Norris's Alley.*

